



Verbal violence at the Brazilian National Congress: discourse analysis of an insult and its political and legal effects

Violência verbal no Parlamento brasileiro: análise discursiva de um insulto e seus efeitos políticos e jurídicos

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Abstract: In this article, we analyze the discursive functioning of a case of verbal violence perpetrated in the Brazilian National Congress, which involved deputies Jair Bolsonaro (then a member of PSL-RJ) and Maria do Rosário Nunes (PT-RS) during the Chamber of Deputies' plenary session that commemorated the International Human Rights Day, in 2014. The *corpus* consists of news articles covering the event. In the analysis, we applied the theoretical-methodological framework of Discourse Analysis to identify the effects of meaning produced in the relationship between political and legal discourses on verbal violence in the public sphere. Our results indicated that, at the intersection of actuality and memory, there is a tension between effects of meaning that structure and restructure verbal violence according to different discursive positions in different social places that, on the one hand, produce effects such as moral damages and the breach of parliamentary decorum, and on the other hand, the effect of a outspoken speech, allowed by the exercise of freedom of expression and by parliamentary immunity.

Keywords: verbal violence; discourse analysis; political discourse; legal discourse; media.

Resumo: Neste trabalho, analisamos o funcionamento discursivo de um caso de violência verbal praticada no Congresso brasileiro, que envolveu os deputados Jair Bolsonaro (até então PSL-RJ) e Maria do Rosário (PT-RS), em sessão plenária da Câmara dos Deputados que prestou homenagem ao Dia Internacional do Direitos Humanos, em 2014. O *corpus* é constituído de matérias jornalísticas que tratam do evento. Na análise, mobilizamos referencial teórico-metodológico da Análise de Discurso, para identificar efeitos-sentido produzidos na relação entre o discurso político e o discurso jurídico na prática da violência verbal na esfera pública. Os resultados indicaram que, no entrecruzamento de uma atualidade e de uma memória, há uma tensão de efeitos-sentido que estruturam e reestruturam a violência verbal de acordo com posições discursivas diferentes em diferentes lugares sociais que ora produzem, tais como o efeito de dano moral e de quebra de decoro parlamentar, de um lado; e o efeito de um franco falar, permitido pelo exercício da liberdade de expressão e de uso da imunidade da função pública, de outro lado.

Palavras-chave: violência verbal; análise de discurso; discurso político; discurso jurídico; mídia.

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1 Introduction

War is merely the continuation
of politics by other means.
(Carl von Clausewitz. *Vom kriege*)

Politics is the continuation of war by other means.
(Michel Foucault. *Society must be defended*)

Verbal violence is an ancient, complex and heterogeneous phenomenon that is present in both the private sphere, in the daily life of ordinary people, and the public sphere, in the disputes occurring where major political decisions are made. In her *Petit traité de l'insulte*, Rosier (2009) addresses the differing views on this practice and notes a curious, even fecund, conception proposed by writers and journalists who praise the insult: on the one hand, the insult could be recognized as an “art” with a certain rhetorical appeal and, on the other hand, as a genuine expression of popular speech, close to what Bakhtin called the “language of the

marketplace,” a place where “popular verve, earthiness, buffoonery and ritual obscenities” (ROSIER, 2009, p. 10, our translation),¹ establishing a tension between what we consider, from the perspective of Discourse Analysis, two subject positions: one in which insult is identified with incivility, with a lack of discursive ethics, and another that views insult as the exercise of a kind of blunt speech and linguistic creativity.

The insult² in politics is not a new practice either. Bouchet (2010) states that its use has changed over time, since it was understood according to certain social codes of honor. If very recently arms were used to settle disputes and then a change occurred in the resolution of conflicts as a result of the pacification of customs, as Elias (1994) argued, and of the emergence and consolidation of a certain type of judicial procedures that would later form the basis of our Law, as Foucault (2002) points out, the pacification of words has not yet been fully achieved.

In the wake of these discussions, our focus here is on verbal violence perpetrated in the sphere of public power and, more specifically, on addressing the repercussions of a case of verbal aggression involving members of the Congress in the exercise of their public function. The case refers to the then federal deputy Jair Bolsonaro (PSL-RJ, at the time) insulting Maria do Rosário (PT-RS), also a federal deputy, in a plenary session held in honor of the Human Rights Day, in 2014.

In order to identify and analyze the effects of meaning produced by the intersection of political and legal discourse in the repercussion of this case of verbal violence in Brazilian politics, we selected significant *materialities* (FONSECA-SILVA, 2005) from various news sites that covered the case of the insult made by the then deputy Jair Bolsonaro (PSL-RJ, at the time) against deputy Maria do Rosário (PT-RS), from Bolsonaro’s speech in the Chamber of Deputies’ session on December 9, 2014, to the outcome of the case in 2019, with the confirmation of the conviction for moral damages in the Supreme Federal Court of the then deputy, who, in 2018, was elected President of the Republic of Brazil.

¹ From the original: « C’est que le théoricien soviétique du langage e et grand spécialiste de Rabelais, Mikhaël Bakhtine, appelait le “vocabulaire de la place publique” où se mêlent la verve populaire, la truculence, la bouffonnerie et les obscénités rituelles» (ROSIER, 2009, p. 10).

² Despite the differences, including the legal ones, in the terms referring to all types of verbal violence, we will consider, in this work, “verbal aggression,” “verbal violence” and “insult” as synonyms.

At first, we collected the material for the analytical archive. To that end, we used Google to search for the queries “Bolsonaro” and “Maria do Rosário,” thus obtaining 853,000 results with references to the case. In the process of selecting significant materialities (news articles) regarding the insult and all its repercussions: i) we selected news articles on the subject published on websites of mainstream and well-known media outlets and excluded websites such as blogs and others that just reproduce content from other sources; ii) opinion articles and texts were also excluded; iii) we selected articles that reported the entire case, from the insult to the outcome of the case.

In a second step, we built the discursive corpus with discursive sequences (DSs) extracted from the analytical archive. The criterion for selecting the DSs was regularity in discursive formulations framing and repeating the statements of both the insulting part and the insulted part, in addition to pronouncements from the judges who decided on the case, as a form of “reported speech,” as proposed by Authier-Revuz (2004).

That said, the following sections will address some linguistic studies that deal with verbal violence and situate some key concepts of the Discourse Analysis theoretical framework that support our analyzes of the discursive corpus. Subsequently, we will examine discursive sequences that constitute the discursive corpus and discuss the results. Finally, we present our conclusions.

2 Language, discourse and verbal violence

The phenomenon of verbal violence is an object of research interest for various fields of knowledge. In the language sciences, this topic has been addressed with different approaches, of which we will provide some examples. Laforest and Vincent (2004, p. 60) carried out a survey of these research approaches, which can be categorized into four groups. The first group corresponds to lexical-semantic or syntactic approaches, which allow researchers to classify the usual forms of insult or explain their properties. The second consists of sociolinguistic approaches, of which Labov (1972) is the pioneer by developing and disseminating his studies on ritualized insults in the New York ghettos. The third group refers to pragmatic approaches in a broad sense, which focus on the performative, vocative character of the insult, or on its enunciative aspects. It is important to point out that this approach focuses on a legal dimension of the act of insulting and the conditions in which it

occurs. Finally, the fourth group comprises ethnolinguistic approaches, which are concerned, in some way, with answering research questions from an ethnolinguistic view of communication: who, how and when to insult and in what language.

Although different research perspectives on insult could be used to perform this categorization, Laforest and Vincent (2004, p. 60-61) emphasize that all the research they examined are a mixture of these approaches. This is due to the fact that: i) there are, in all languages, some forms of insult; ii) insults are generally metaphorical or metonymic, and often hyperbolic; iii) insults associate the persons targeted to beings or animals, negatively qualified, or to objects and substances deemed unpleasant; and iv) any direct insult presents a vocative and performative dimension, that is, it is enunciated by an “I” (the insulter) that addresses a “you” (the insulted).

In our study, however, as we have already pointed out, we are interested in examining from the perspective of Discourse Analysis the effects of meaning produced in the intersection of political and legal discourses in the case of the verbal insult uttered by then deputy Jair Bolsonaro (PSL-RJ) against the deputy Maria do Rosário (PT-RS), since the confirmation of the conviction for moral damages by the Federal Supreme Court of the deputy that later was raised to the presidency of Brazil in the 2018 election. To this end, we examined the insult in light of the tensions and contradictions arising from the different subject-positions in different discursive formations operating in the country’s public democratic arenas, and as a case of verbal violence (there was also an insulting gesture, which is not the object of our interest here) that produces certain effects of meaning involving the disparagement and the annihilation of the opponent, a maximum hostility towards the supposed enemy, denial effects, etc.

The subject we are dealing with here is not the pragmatic subject, who thinks and acts with the “intention” of insulting and harming the insulted person, for example, but the subject of discourse (PÊCHEUX, 2009), a subject³ established in/by the discursive memory. The subject-position is thus a place where meaning operates in the social structure (subject-form), which is occupied by an enunciating subject,

³ “A subject who carries social, ideological and historical marks, and has the illusion of being the source of meaning” (GRIGOLETTO, 2007, p. 1).

a “spokesperson” of the insulting speech who identifies with that place. Grigoletto (2007, p. 4) makes a distinction between the materiality of the social place (occupied by the empirical subject) and the discursive place (a position occupied by the subject of discourse) to show how the empirical subject is inscribed in a discursive formation (DF) to become a subject of discourse. Grigoletto uses Pêcheux’s concept of imaginary formations (PÊCHEUX, 2014) to argue that the representations that the subjects make of themselves and of others are defined by institutional places that, in turn, are constituted within a social formation by different relationships of power previously instituted and consolidated as the truth. Thus, the place of a deputy in the Brazilian political system and the place of a judge or of a Federal Supreme Court’s justice in the country’s judicial structure, for example, are already determined by the place assigned to them in a certain social formation, and this is always the place from which the subject speaks. Still according to Grigoletto,

[...] the subject of discourse, at the same time that she is ideologically challenged by/subjected to the social formation, is inscribed in/occupies one of the social places that have been assigned to her. This is the space of the empirical. In the transition from the theoretical space [...] to the discursive space, the social place that the subject occupies in a given social and ideological formation, which is affected by power relations, will determine her discursive place, through the movement of the subject-form and of the discursive formation itself with which the subject identifies (GRIGOLETTO, 2005, p. 5).

In this sense, both subject and meaning are mutually constituted as effects. And different subject-positions, structured in the relationship between the enunciating subject in a given social place and a subject-form, are also only possible because language, the material basis of discursive processes, is not transparent and, therefore, the meanings are also not univocal. The place where meanings are constituted, the provisional historical place of the meanings, the matrix of the meanings, in this perspective, are the Discursive Formations (DFs),⁴ which

⁴ One or more discursive formations constitute one of the components of what Pêcheux (2011) and Haroche, Henry and Pêcheux (2007) called Ideological Formation (IF). According to these authors, ideological formations (IF) exist within social formations and are a “complex set of attitudes and representations that are neither ‘individual’

determine “what can and should be said (articulated in the form of a speech, a sermon, a report, a programme, etc.) from a given position in a given conjuncture” (HAROCHE; HENRY; PÊCHEUX, 2007, p. 26; PÊCHEUX; FUCHS, 2014, p. 166). Words thus change their meaning “according to the positions held by those who use them” and “change their meaning as they pass from one discursive formation to another” (PÊCHEUX, 2011, p. 73).⁵ Therefore, language, the material basis of discourse, which is historically affected and which also affects history, is understood as equivocal, flawed. It follows that:

The object of linguistics, that which is proper to *langue*, thus appears to be traversed by a discursive division between two spaces: that of the manipulation of stabilized significations, normalized by a pedagogical hygiene of thought, and that of the transformation of meaning, escaping from all a priori assignable norms, the work of meaning on meaning, grasped in an indefinite ‘rebirth’ of interpretations (PÊCHEUX, 2006, p. 51; translated by Warren Montag).

Pêcheux (2006) argues that every statement, in a description or interpretation, has points susceptible to a slippage of meanings and, by being able to reorganize itself in other memory networks, its meanings can also slip back or even become other. And it is in these possible points of slippage, at the meeting point of current events and memories, that meanings can be structured and restructured. It is in this space that Discourse Analysis operates and it is in this space that the analyst must operate (ORLANDI, 2005; PÊCHEUX, 2006; SCHERER; TASCETTO, 2005).

Thus, in analyzing the discursive corpus, we seek to show how different subject-positions produce different effects of meaning that function in the event according to the social places that insulter and insulted occupy, disturbing memory and producing points of slippage of meaning that structure and restructure the political and the legal discourses.

nor ‘universal,’ but relate more or less directly to class positions in conflict with each other” (HAROCHE; HENRY; PÊCHEUX, 2007, p. 26; PÊCHEUX; FUCHS, 2014).

⁵ “According to Michel Pêcheux, words do not have a meaning attached to their literalness, meaning is always a word for another, it exists in the metaphorical relationships (transference) happening in the discursive formations that are its provisional historical place” (ORLANDI, 2005, p. 11).

3 The insult and its political and legal effects

On December 9, 2014, in a session of the Chamber of Deputies commemorating the International Human Rights Day, a date that also marked the delivery of the final report of the National Truth Commission,⁶ Deputy Jair Bolsonaro (PSL-RJ) verbally assaulted deputy Maria do Rosário (PT-RS) as she left the speaker's podium and he took the floor: "Stay there, Maria do Rosário, stay there ... a few days ago you called me a rapist in the Green Room and I said that I wouldn't rape you because you don't deserve it. Stay here to listen."⁷ This was the second rape-related insult event involving the two deputies. The first was an insult that took place in one of the Chamber of Deputies' passageways during a Rede TV live broadcast of an interview with Deputy Bolsonaro,⁸ in November 2003, in which he defended lowering the age of criminal responsibility⁹ and she accused him of promoting violence, including sexual violence. He replied: "I would never rape you because you don't deserve it" and called her a "bitch" (*vagabunda*).¹⁰

Although the empirical subjects Jair Bolsonaro and Maria do Rosário, at the time, occupied the same position in the social structure, that of federal deputy, member of the National Congress, while identifying themselves (and they continue to do so) with the subject-form of differing discursive formations (DFs). In the discursive approach of

⁶ The National Truth Commission (*Comissão Nacional da Verdade – CNV*) was a collegiate body created by Law 12,528/2011 that started operating on May 16, 2012, with the purpose of investigating serious human rights violations occurred between September 18, 1946 and October 5, 1988, a period encompassing the military-civilian dictatorship. In December 2013, CNV's mandate was extended to December 2014 by provisional measure No. 632. Available at: <http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/>. Accessed on April 10, 2020.

⁷ Excerpt transcribed from the deputy's speech during the session of the Chamber and broadcast by TV Cultura in a news report. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzNva866hiw>. Accessed on: 5 jul. 2020.

⁸ The full video showing the verbal aggression can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LD8-b4wvIjc>. Access: 5 jul. 2020.

⁹ At the time, there was a national discussion about the torture and murder of the couple Liana Friedenbach and Felipe Caffé, in a rural property near the city of São Paulo, by a group led by Roberto Aparecido Alves Cardoso, known as "Champinha," who was then a minor.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/504802/noticia.html>. Accessed on Dec. 20, 2019.

the Brazilian media, and from the social place he occupied, Bolsonaro gained prominence for defending the military-civilian dictatorship, the extension of the right to keep firearms to all citizens, the Christian values and the traditional family; and also for spreading hate speech against women, against minorities in general and against human rights and all human rights defenders,¹¹ thus indicating his identification with the subject-form of the far-right DF. The deputy/congresswoman Maria do Rosário, in turn, became widely known for defending human rights and the democratic rule of law. She was rapporteur and author of bills aimed at combating the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and held the position of Minister of Human Rights between April 2011 and April 2014, during the first term of then President Dilma Rousseff, which indicates identification with the subject-form of the left DF.

We emphasize that, even while identifying with the subject-form of differing discursive formations, they are expected to speak in a courteous manner. It happens, however, that it is in discursive formations that are constituted the meanings that determine what should and can be said. This implies, in this case, that the disagreement on Human rights issues is at the heart of the constitution of the effects of meaning related to the verbal insults involving the two congress members, but this disagreement does not justify verbal aggression, hate speech against minorities or racist, homophobic and misogynistic statements. We examine below DSs belonging to the circulation-confrontation network of the discursive formulations regarding the insult case in question:

(DS01) In a plenary speech, Deputy Jair Bolsonaro (PP-RJ) said yesterday that **he would not commit rape against Deputy Maria do Rosário (PT-RS) only “because she doesn’t deserve it.”** The attack came after the PT used the Chamber’s podium to commemorate the International Human Rights Day and to comment on the final report of the National Truth Commission (CNV). This is the second time that Bolsonaro has offended the former Minister of the Human Rights

¹¹ Among the Bolsonaro’s statements in which we can identify hate speech against women and minorities in general, we highlight: “I would not employ [women and men] with the same salary. But there are many women who are competent.” Available at: https://www.huffpostbrasil.com/2018/08/18/bolsonaro-afirmou-sim-que-nao-empregaria-mulher-com-mesmo-salario-de-homem_a_23504540/. Accessed on December 28, 2019.

Secretariat by referring to rape (<https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/504802/noticia.html>. our.).

- (DS02) Maria do Rosário was leaving the plenary of the Chamber after making her speech, when Bolsonaro came up to the podium and shouted: “Don’t leave, Maria do Rosário, stay there. Stay there, Maria do Rosário. A few days ago you called me a rapist in the Green Room **and I said I wouldn’t rape you because you don’t deserve it.** Stay here to listen.” (<https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/504802/noticia.html>. Emphasis added.)
- (DS03) Repeat Offender
It is the second time that Bolsonaro, as a deputy, **says he will not rape Maria do Rosário because she does not deserve it.** In November 2003, he argued with her, who was a deputy, in front of RedeTV’s cameras in the National Congress. She had accused Bolsonaro of promoting violence, including sexual violence: “You do promote it,” the deputy was saying. “Record that now I’m a rapist,” replied the [Progressive Party] member. “**I would never rape you, because you don’t deserve it,**” he added (<https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/504802/noticia.html>. Emphasis added.)
- (DS04) Confronted with the speech, Maria do Rosário said that she would slap Bolsonaro if he tried something. She started being pushed by the deputy, who replied “slap me and I slap you back,” before starting to call her “**bitch**” and being restrained by the Chamber’s security guards. Very upset, the *petista* (member of PT) criticized him for calling any woman a “bitch.” (<https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/504802/noticia.html>. Emphasis added.)
- (DS05) Judge orders Bolsonaro to pay R\$ 10,000 to Maria do Rosário for offenses. Tatiana Medina, from the 18th Civil Court of Brasília, gave the president 15 days to indemnify the *petista* for having said **he would not rape her because “she’s very ugly.”** (<https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/juiza-send-bolsonaro-pay-r-10-thousand-a-maria-do-rosario-for-offenses/>. Emphasis added.)

- (DS06) Marco Aurélio Mello rejected an appeal and confirmed indemnity for moral damages to the PT deputy. The President was convicted for declaring that **she did not deserve to be “raped” because she is “very ugly.”** ([https://www1.folha.uol.com.br /power/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/power/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml). Emphasis added.)
- (DS07) The indemnity for moral damages refers to the episode in which Bolsonaro said that **Maria do Rosário did not deserve to be raped**. After making this statement in the Chamber, the then deputy repeated in an interview that **“she doesn’t deserve it because she is very bad, because she is very ugly, she is not my type.”** ([https://www1.folha.uol.com.br /power/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/power/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml). Emphasis added.)

In DSs 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 and 07, we identified what Pêcheux (2009) calls the metaphorical effect, which consists of a slippage between two points produced by the formulation, reformulation and/or displacement of meanings. According to Fonseca-Silva (2012), it is the slippage of meanings, whether through paraphrase, in formulation and reformulation processes, or through polysemy, in processes of rupture, of displacement, that allows the analyst to determine both the interpretation and the historicity of statements, because “on the one hand, words, expressions, etc., do not have meaning by themselves; on the other hand, there is no meaning without metaphor, because meaning is always outlined in the relationship that a word or expression has with another word or expression” (FONSECA-SILVA, 2012, p. 194). In the relationship of metaphorical effect and in the paraphrastic game of circulation-confrontation of discursive formulations that traverse DSs 01 to 07, we highlight the following:

- (a) “I wouldn’t commit rape against Deputy Maria do Rosário only” (PT-RS) “because she doesn’t deserve it.”
 “I said I wouldn’t rape you because you don’t deserve it”
 “Says he will not rape Maria do Rosário because she does not deserve it”
 “Maria do Rosário did not deserve to be raped”

- (b) “bitch”
 “[He] would not rape her because ‘she’s very ugly’”
 “She doesn’t deserve it because she is very bad, because she is very ugly, she is not my type”

In the opacity of the words and expressions used in the insult, highlighted in (a) and (b), we identify a subject-position that produces effects of meaning of disparagement, of annihilation of the opponent, of maximum hostility to women, of misogyny.

In the paraphrastic game of (a), the subject-position produces the effect of meaning that some women deserve to be raped and others do not. In the points of slippage of meaning produced in the circulation-confrontation of formulations, rape is a prize or a kind of torture/punishment. On the one hand, a woman “deserves” to be raped for presenting characteristics differing from those attributed to the object of insult; on the other hand, a woman “does not deserve” to be raped because she is also the object of the insult, to whom not even a heinous act like rape would be a satisfactory punishment for the insulting person. In the paraphrastic game of (b), the same subject-position produces an effect of meaning of justification and reinforcement of the insult: a woman who does not deserve to be raped is a “bitch,” “ugly,” “very bad,”¹² “is not my type.”

The subject-position identified in DSs 01 to 07 functions within the far-right DF, which reduces, produces and reinforces the effect of meaning of disparaging women through misogynistic and sexist discourses. The “negated” threat present in the statement “I wouldn’t rape you because you don’t deserve it” slips to gain another meaning, however, and because it produces an effect of meaning of maximum hostility to a person, it violates human rights and is considered a crime according to Brazilian law. In their article *Deslizamientos en los sentidos de víctima y autor de delito sexual en los títulos de los Códigos Penales brasileños que se ocupan de los delitos sexuales y efectos de sentido*, Silva and Fonseca-Silva (2014) analyzed the Brazilian penal codes of 1830, 1890 and 1940, as well as Law 12,015/2009, in order to identify the effects of meaning of the crimes listed in each Code and the slippages

¹² These terms belong to a group that linguists (ROSIER, 2009; YAGUELLO, 1982) usually call *ad hominem* insults, as they consist of a disparagement produced by considerations about the physical appearance or supposed behavior of the insulted person.

of meaning occurring in Law 12,015 of 2009. All the Codes, according to the particularities of each historical period, described what constituted the crime of rape and who could be the perpetrator and the victim of rape. Silva and Fonseca-Silva show that Law 12,015/2009, enacted in the discursive context of the emerging struggle for Human Rights and Human Dignity, incorporated the indecent assault (*atentado violento ao pudor* – i.e. sexual act without vaginal intercourse) into the crime of rape. The codes also restructured the subject-position of both the victim and the perpetrator. Anyone, whether male or female, can be a perpetrator or victim of sexual crime. Another development concerning the nature of the crime occurred in 2009, when the First Panel of the Federal Supreme Court, by unanimous decision, maintained the court’s understanding that rape constitutes a heinous crime (*crime hediondo*), which is an aggravating factor.¹³ Before this decision, rape would only be considered a heinous crime if the act involved serious injury or death, constituting an aggravated rape. Currently, every act legally defined as rape is considered a heinous crime. These transformations of meaning show that the “negated” threat of rape – “[I] won’t/wouldn’t rape you only because you don’t/wouldn’t deserve” – constitutes a breach of parliamentary decorum, as we will see later, but they also evoke memories of torture, in particular that committed during the military dictatorship.

To proceed with our analysis, we return to our corpus, addressing excerpts from another news article, also posted on the website of the *Agência Câmara de Notícias*, in which Deputy Bolsonaro stated in an interview his reasons for the attack, presented in DSs 08 and 09 as follows:

- (DS08) According to Bolsonaro, **the first argument was about lowering the age of criminal responsibility** and, now, **the reason was the completion of the work of the National Truth Commission**. (<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/447616-conselho-de-etica-instaura-processo-por-quebra-de-decoro-contr-jair-bolsonaro/>. Emphasis added.)
- (DS09) “Although we men are more insensitive to provocation, **she called me a rapist**. When she spoke about **the libels of the commission known as the truth [commission]** - for me, **it**

¹³ Available at: <http://www.stf.jus.br/portal/cms/verNoticiaDetalhe.asp?idConteudo=109941>. Accessed on April 16, 2020.

is the farce and lie commission - she attacked the Armed Forces in general,” he said. “I simply recalled a fact that occurred in 2003, nothing more than that [...]” (<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/447616-conselho-de-etica-institui-processo-para-quebrar-decoro-contrario-a-jair-bolsonaro/>. Emphasis added.)

These discursive sequences are in a paraphrastic relationship with the set of sequences presented above. SD08 is in a paraphrastic relationship with SD03, which presents the insulter as a “repeat offender” and recalls the two moments in which the acts of verbal violence occurred: “It is the second time that Bolsonaro, as a deputy, says he will not rape Maria do Rosário,” “the first argument was about lowering the age of criminal responsibility and, now, the reason was the completion of the work of the National Truth Commission.” At the beginning of this section, we presented the contexts of the two acts of verbal aggression, which are related to the meanings attributed to Human Rights in different and divergent discursive formations.

The first case engendered a tension between the positions of the two deputies, who arguing against and in favor of lowering the age of criminal responsibility, thus generating the first verbal aggression, which almost ended in physical aggression. In SD03, Deputy Jair Bolsonaro was called to occupy the subject-position of the one who “promotes violence, including sexual violence” by the discursive approach of his political opponent, usually from the left of the Brazilian political spectrum. And in the conflict, the linguistic formulation of a left-wing discursive formation derives its meaning in the enunciation of the far-right political subject. The formulation “promoting violence, including sexual violence” slips to “rapist,” a term used in SD09, producing the effect of meaning of a libel victim, while in the paraphrastic chain he is identified with this subject-position due to the negated threat rape against the Deputy Maria do Rosário.

The second reason, already mentioned in the first set of selected discursive sequences, is presented through reported speech (AUTHIEZ-REVUZ, 2004), “she called me a rapist,” “she attacked the Armed Forces in general,” she defended “the libels of the commission known as the truth [commission], for me, it is the farce and lie commission,” producing the effect of meaning of an opponent’s provocation due to his positions.

Thus, if in the left-wing DF the effect of meaning produced by Deputy Bolsonaro's statement is one of verbal aggression and incitement to rape, in the far-right DF, the statement produces an effect of meaning of defense against or response to a provocation.

This political confrontation creates a tension between subject-positions of differing DFs underpinned by the same social place, engaging memory in the structure of the language, restructuring the statements and the meanings related to "Human Rights." On one side, there is a subject-position that defends the institutionalization of a set of human rights, with state protection and the guarantee of minimum conditions of life and human development for all people, in order to safeguard the right to human dignity; it is against lowering the age of criminal responsibility and defends the work of the National Truth Commission, which investigated human rights violations committed by the State during the military dictatorship. On the other side, there is a subject-position that restructures the effects of meaning of truth and lie, and determines who can or cannot be protected by institutions defending "Human Rights." In the DF in which this subject-position operates, the work of the National Truth Commission¹⁴ is a "lie," a "farce," because it attacks [the image] of the Armed Forces, a group responsible for the establishment of a military government in 1964, which, among other measures, was responsible for suppressing political rights, closing the Brazilian National Congress and restricting the freedom of expression.

In this sense, what in the left-wing DF is classified as a crime against the Brazilian people during the military government period, in the far-right FD are legitimate actions, and therefore their honor in the present cannot be attacked. Effects of meaning of injustice are thus produced in the confrontations-formulations. In the left-wing DF, injustice is directed against the victims of the State, who deserve to be remembered; and in the far-right DF, the effect is of injustice against the Armed Forces, which did what was necessary to secure order. Conversely, with regard to the lowering of the age of criminal responsibility – an issue at the

¹⁴ It is important to emphasize that the National Truth Commission is not punitive in nature. It was created with the aim of investigating cases of torture involving agents of the Brazilian State during the period under investigation. Researcher Freda Indursky (2013) presents an analysis of the Amnesty Law and the National Truth Commission in the afterword of the 2nd edition of her book *A fala dos quartéis e as outras vozes* (The speech of the barracks and other voices).

root of the first insult episode involving the two deputies – in this DF, an effect of injustice and impunity is also produced, because the punitive measures provided for in the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA¹⁵) are considered too mild to be an effective punishment. It would thus not be legitimate for someone who commits a crime, while being a minor, to not be “punished” with the necessary rigor. In the left-wing DF, the socio-educational measures established in ECA are legitimate and need to be followed.

Recovering the memory of repression in the military dictatorship, not only in Brazil, but also throughout Latin America, showed that the torture of citizens considered dangerous to the regime was a common practice. The methods of torture reported by political prisoners were diverse and, among them, sexual violence¹⁶ was used against women, men and even children. Audoin-Rouzeau (2013), in examining the relations between virility and sexuality in war situations, discusses the establishment of a “military-virile *habitus*” (p. 247) of the Fighting culture that engages a set of gestures and representations of themselves, of others and of women in the “virilization” of soldiers. The sexual dimension is a key point in military training and there is an over investment in the phallic dimension of guns. The author quotes, for example, the account of a Vietnam veteran who makes the following statement: “a gun is power. To some people carrying a gun is like having a permanent hard-on. It was a pure sexual trip every time you got to pull the trigger” (DAVE GROSSMAN apud AUDION-ROUZEAU, 2013, p. 249). The eroticization of the gun is thus part of the discourse of violence in times

¹⁵ The Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) is a Brazilian legal text that was approved at 1990 by National Congress, following the commitment to protect all children in the world in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), by signatory nations. The aim of this law is to regulate the integral protection and the guarantee of the rights of children and adolescents, in view of their peculiar condition of development. To know more about this law, confer: www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/18069.htm and Brasil de Direitos.

¹⁶ Some reports of torture and sexual violence committed by state agents during the military period were reported by the media. See, for example: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2014/12/10/politica/1418210232_634592.html?id_externo_rsoc=FB_CC&fbclid=IwAR2V65jbEP2PgzdeqhGIWZ4DI1DKCD8PHUFpThFg2oqYoPADQ1. Accessed on Feb. 16, 2020. For a complete report by the National Truth Commission, see: <http://memoriasdaditadura.org.br/>. Accessed on April 16, 2020.

of war, and the gun becomes a symbol of power, strength and virility. It is important to highlight that the politician Jair Bolsonaro often appears in the media making an L-shaped gesture, mimicking a gun with his index and thumb fingers, besides being in favor, among other proposals, of facilitating gun access for the Brazilian population. Thus, words and gestures produce effects in a sexual insult as a brutal disparagement of the opponent and not just as a normal political argument over opposing political positions, as pointed out by Oger:

Finally, both psychoanalysis and the analysis of the discourse of the insulted invite us to consider with great reserve or circumspection the paradoxical valorization of verbal violence which sometimes presents itself as a totally positive substitute for physical violence, which would be thus avoided. The symbolic killing of the opponent as a language procedure (Oger 2003) and, in the case of women, the traumatic humiliation similar to that of rape (Oger 2006) constitute signs of a relationship – symbolic, if not consecutive – between verbal violence and physical violence (OGER, 2012, p. 2-3).¹⁷

Next in our examination of discursive sequences from a news article by *Agência Câmara Notícias*, we present those referring to legal cases seeking to hold Deputy Bolsonaro responsible for his statements. Macedo (2020), when addressing the discursive approach to crime and damage against women domestic workers in the labor and criminal spheres, points out the Brazilian legal fragmentation made possible by the differing legal interpretations of a same phenomenon in various judicial areas, which configure discursive spaces not logically stabilized. We present below DSs illustrating this interpretative polysemy in relation to the phenomenon of verbal aggression:

¹⁷ From the original: “Enfin, la psychanalyse comme l’analyse du discours des injurié(e) s invitent à considérer avec beaucoup de réserve ou de circonspection la valorisation paradoxale de la violence verbale, présentée parfois comme un substitut somme toute positif à la violence physique, à laquelle elle éviterait au moins de recourir. La mise à mort symbolique de l’adversaire comme procédé langagier (Oger 2003), et dans le cas des femmes, l’humiliation traumatique comparée à celle du viol (Oger 2006) constituent des indices d’une relation – symbolique, à défaut de consécutive – entre violence verbale et violence physique” (OGER, 2012, p. 2-3).

- (SD10) Also this Tuesday, **accompanied by representatives of the Congressional women’s caucus and human rights defenders, Deputy Rosário filed a criminal complaint** with the Supreme Federal Court **against Bolsonaro for insult and libel**. (<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/447616-conselho-de-etica-instaura-processo-por-quebra-de-decoro-contr-jair-bolsonaro/>. Emphasis added.)
- (SD11) **Rosário denied having called the deputy a rapist**: “I have never, ever called him [a rapist]. And, if people watch the entire video, they **will see that this is insult, libel and slander, which I do not accept**. That’s why **I filed a criminal complaint, because I want him punished for that**.” (<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/447616-conselho-de-etica-instaura-processo-por-quebra-de-decoro-contr-jair-bolsonaro/>. Emphasis added.)
- (SD12) The leader of the PT in the Chamber, Vicentinho (SP), said that **the party will file a complaint with the Ethics Committee for breach of parliamentary decorum, in addition to filing a lawsuit against Bolsonaro**. (<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/447616-conselho-de-etica-instaura-processo-por-quebra-de-decoro-contr-jair-bolsonaro/>. Emphasis added.)
- (SD13) **Public Prosecutor’s Office**
On Monday, **the deputy attorney-general of the Republic, Ela Wiecko, had already filed charges against Bolsonaro**, also with the STF, **for inciting the crime of rape**, which carries a penalty of 3 to 6 months in prison. (<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/447616-conselho-de-etica-instaura-processo-por-quebra-de-decoro-contr-jair-bolsonaro/>. Emphasis added.)

DSs 10 to 13 are in a paraphrastic relationship with each other and present accounts of the legal actions taken by Deputy Maria do Rosário, PT, the Public Prosecutor’s Office and human rights defenders against Deputy Bolsonaro’s verbal aggression. However, a polysemy of meanings arises from the differing treatments of the same fact, which vary according to where the complaints are made: an administrative complaint was filed with the Chamber’s Ethics Committee (DS12), and

three complaints were filed with the courts, one in the civil ambit and two in the criminal ambit (DSs 10, 11 and 13). At the administrative level, Maria do Rosário and the PT occupy the same subject-position of complainant, while Jair Bolsonaro is called to occupy the subject-position of accused of breach of parliamentary decorum.

In the courts, the act of verbal aggression is subject to complaint both in the civil and criminal spheres. In the civil sphere, the legal effects of meaning of verbal violence arise from legal provisions, specifically from Article 5, item V of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which establishes that:

Article 5. All persons are equal before the law, without any distinction whatsoever, Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country being ensured of inviolability of the right to life, to liberty, to equality, to security and to property, on the following terms:

V – the right of reply is ensured, in proportion to the offense, as well as compensation for property or moral damages or for damages to the image;¹⁸

(Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 5th Edition, Edições Câmara, 2016)

This article is included in the 1988 Federal Constitution's Title II, which provides for the fundamental rights and guarantees of Brazilians and foreigners residents, and establishes individual and collective rights and duties. The item V of Article 5 guarantees both the right to reply and an indemnity in the event of a violation, whether material, moral or of the image of the citizen. Thus, in this legal discourse, the effects of meaning produced by the denunciation of verbal aggression in the civil sphere call upon the far-right deputy to occupy the subject-position of defendant in a legal action asking for compensation for moral damages and damages to the image of others, while Deputy Maria do Rosário occupies the subject-position of complainant in a legal case asking for indemnity for moral damages filed with the court of first instance. In the criminal sphere, the legal effects of meaning of verbal violence arise from legal provisions, specifically from Article 286 of the Penal Code: "Publicly inciting the commission of a crime: Penalty: three to six months of imprisonment, or

¹⁸ Available at: https://www.senado.leg.br/atividade/const/con1988/con1988_06.06.2017/art_102_.asp. Accessed on Feb. 17, 2020.

fine.”¹⁹ This criminal charge was filed by the Public Prosecutor’s Office itself, as mentioned in SD13, and Bolsonaro is called upon to occupy the subject-position of defendant for inciting the crime of rape.

A second criminal complaint was filed against Bolsonaro, as mentioned in SD11, in which “[Deputy] Rosário denied having called the deputy a rapist.” Thus her statement – presented here in quotation marks in the form of reported speech (AUTHIER-REVUZ, 2004): “If people watch the entire video, they will see that this is insult, libel and slander, which I do not accept” – produces the effect of a false accusation by Jair Bolsonaro against Maria do Rosário. In this sense, “the entire video,” recorded in 2003 when Rede TV interviewed Bolsonaro, and which captured the argument between the two deputies, produces a slippage of meaning to prove both the innocence of Deputy Maria do Rosário and Deputy Jair Bolsonaro’s false accusation against her of a crime against his honor. Deputy Maria do Rosário herself filed a complaint against Deputy Bolsonaro for the crime of insult, as provided for in Article 140 of the Penal Code:²⁰

Article 140 – To insult someone, offending his/her dignity or decorum:

Penalty – detention of one to six months, or fine.

Paragraph 1 – The judge may refrain from applying the penalty: I – when the offended, in a reproachable manner, directly provoked the insult;

II – in case of immediate retort, consisting of another insult.

Paragraph 2 – If the insult consists of violence or physical aggression, which, by its nature or through the means used, is considered humiliating:

Penalty – detention of three months to one year, and fine, other than the penalty corresponding to the violence used.

The criminal cases filed against Deputy Bolsonaro produce legal effects of meaning, in which Jair Bolsonaro is called upon to occupy the

¹⁹ Available at: https://www.meuvademeconline.com.br/legislacao/codigos/3/codigo-penal-decreto-lei-n-2-848-de-7-de-dezembro-de-1940/artigo_286. Accessed on Feb. 17, 2020.

²⁰ Available at: <https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/topicos/10622653/artigo-140-do-decreto-lei-n-2848-de-07-de-dezembro-de-1940>. Accessed on April 17, 2020.

subject-position of defendant and Deputy Maria do Rosário occupies the subject-position of victim of insult. However, we use once again the notion of social place to examine legal functioning with regard to these cases. According to Article 102, Item I and sub-item b of the 1988 Federal Constitution:²¹

Article 102. The Federal Supreme Court is responsible, essentially, for safeguarding the Constitution, and it is within its competence: I – to institute legal proceeding and trial, in the first instance, of: b) in common criminal offenses, the President of the Republic, the Vice-President, the members of the National Congress, its own Justices and the Attorney-General of the Republic;

According to the provisions of Article 102, Jair Bolsonaro's social place produced legal effects of meaning in the criminal cases filed against him. Because he was occupying the social place of member of the National Congress, it was the Federal Supreme Court that was responsible for deciding on the two criminal complaints filed against him – one filed by his colleague in Congress, the other by the Public Prosecutor's Office itself. We also present the progress of these actions and the legal effects of meaning produced by the change in Jair Bolsonaro's social place, from federal deputy to president of the Republic:

- (DS14) Judge Tatiana Dias da Silva Medina, of the 18th Civil Court of Brasília, set a period of 15 days for **President Jair Bolsonaro to pay 10,000 reais in compensation to federal deputy Maria do Rosário (PT-RS) for offenses against her**. According to the judge's decision, the president will also have to make apologies in a mass-circulation newspaper and on social networks. (<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml>. Emphasis added.)
- (DS15) **STF Minister Marco Aurélio dismissed the appeal by President Jair Bolsonaro (PSL) and confirmed lower court decisions that ordered him to pay R\$ 10,000 to Deputy Maria do Rosário (PT-RS)**. The decision was taken

²¹ Available at: https://www.senado.leg.br/atividade/const/con1988/con1988_06.06.2017/art_102_.asp. Accessed on March 17, 2020.

on the 14th and was published on Tuesday 19th. (<https://www.conjur.com.br/2019-fev-19/marco-aurelio-mantem-indenizacao-bolsonaro-maria-rosario>. Emphasis added.)

- (DS16) For the minister [Nancy Andrighi, of the Superior Court of Justice], considering that the offense was reported in the press and on the internet, the simple fact that the parliamentarian was on the premises of the Chamber of Deputies “is merely an incidental element, which do not entail immunity.” (<https://kleberruddy.jusbrasil.com.br/noticias/488517208/stj-condena-jair-bolsonaro-a-indenizar-deputada-maria-do-rosario-por-danos-morais>.)
- (DS17) **Bolsonaro’s defense appealed to the Supreme Court on the grounds that the statements were protected by the parliamentary immunity** provided for in the Constitution – an argument that had already been rejected by the STJ. In his decision, Minister Marco Aurélio stated that the appeal to the Supreme Court intended to generate a review of evidence, which is not allowed. (<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml>. Emphasis added.)
- (DS18) **The complaint that led to the order to pay an indemnity was filed with the civil court. In the criminal sphere,** Bolsonaro was a defendant in two cases at the Supreme Court on charges of inciting the crime of rape and committing insult. **These cases were suspended last week by the reporting minister,** Luiz Fux, based on the constitutional provision that the President of the Republic can only be prosecuted for alleged crimes committed in the exercise of his mandate. (<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/02/stf-nega-recurso-de-bolsonaro-e-mantem-indenizacao-a-maria-do-rosario.shtml>. Emphasis added.)

DSs 14, 15, 16 and 17 concern the Deputy Bolsonaro’s conviction in the civil court, which forced him to pay an indemnity to Deputy Maria do Rosário in the amount of R\$ 10,000. In addition, the now president was ordered to make apologies to his opponent, both on social networks and in a national mass-circulation newspaper, on the basis of Article 5, Item

V of the Federal Constitution, mentioned above. An appeal was made against the ruling, as shown in DS16, which was denied in all instances. The appeal mentioned Article 53 of the Federal Constitution,²² which establishes that: “Deputies and Senators [shall] enjoy civil and criminal inviolability on account of any of their opinions, words and votes.” In this discursive position, the effect of meaning produced in the appeal, in the restructuring/interpretation of this article of the Federal Constitution, is that of parliamentary immunity as an inviolable right in the exercise of a public function, as claimed by the Deputy Bolsonaro’s defense, as presented in SD17. In this position, the verbal aggression that generated the prosecution, both in the civil and criminal courts, constitutes the exercise of free expression of opinion and words in his parliamentary activity. In the same perspective, the conviction produces an effect of meaning of non-compliance with this principle and restriction of the freedom of opinion. In the discursive position of judicial operators, whether of a Minister of the Supreme Federal Court, a Minister of the Superior Court of Justice or lower court judges, the right to parliamentary immunity is not unqualified, and Deputy Bolsonaro’s statement has no relation to his parliamentary activity. That said, the decision was confirmed and Bolsonaro was convicted in civil court, as presented in DSs 14, 15 and 16. However, DS 18 presents a different discursive functioning, traversed by the change in the social place occupied by the empirical subject Jair Bolsonaro, which caused the suspension of the criminal proceedings. We present below Article 86,²³ paragraph 4, which are in the Federal Constitution’s Title IV, which deals with the Organization of the Powers, Chapter II, on the Executive Power, and Section III, on the Liability of the President of the Republic:

Article 86. If charges against the President of the Republic are accepted by two-thirds of the Chamber of Deputies, he shall be submitted to trial before the Federal Supreme Court for common criminal offenses or before the Federal Senate for crimes of malversation.

²² Available at: https://www.senado.leg.br/atividade/const/con1988/con1988_06.06.2017/art_53_.asp. Accessed on Feb. 17, 2020.

²³ Available at: https://www.senado.leg.br/atividade/const/con1988/CON1988_05.10.1988/art_86_.asp. Accessed on Feb. 17, 2020.

Paragraph 4. During his term of office, the President of the Republic may not be held liable to acts outside the performance of his functions.

DS18 produces the effect of meaning of a non-material harm caused by Deputy Jair Bolsonaro, who is called upon to occupy the subject-position of convicted in a civil case for moral damages. However, criminal proceedings against him have been suspended. This suspension was due to the fact that the social place of the empirical subject Jair Bolsonaro changed from federal deputy to president of the Republic. According to paragraph 4 of article 86, the president can only be prosecuted in the Federal Supreme Court, but not for acts outside the exercise of presidential functions. This applies to criminal cases, but not to proceedings in civil courts. The criminal cases were suspended but not extinguished, which means that as soon as the defendant leaves the presidency, that is, as soon as Jair Bolsonaro no longer occupies the social place of President of the Republic, the proceedings will resume.

DSs 19 and 20 present the fulfillment of the court order to the now president Jair Bolsonaro make apologies for the offense directed at Deputy Maria do Rosário.

(SD19) Following a court order, President **Jair Bolsonaro (PSL) apologized** this Thursday, 13th, to federal deputy **Maria do Rosário** (PT-RS) for offenses against her. (<https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/bolsonaro-pede-desculpas-a-maria-dor-sario-por-ofensas/>. Emphasis added.)

(SD20) **“I come to publicly apologize for my past words addressed to federal deputy Maria do Rosário Nunes. In that episode, in the heat of the moment, in an ideological clash between parliamentarians, specifically with regard to human rights policy, I recalled a fact occurred in 2003, in which, after being unjustly offended by the congresswoman in question, who was insulting me, calling me as a rapist, I replied** saying that she ‘didn’t deserve to be raped,’” posted the president on his official Twitter account. (<https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/bolsonaro-pede-desculpas-a-maria-dor-sario-por-ofensas/>. Emphasis added.)

SD 20 is an excerpt from the public retraction that President Jair Bolsonaro was ordered to publish for having been convicted of verbal assault against Deputy Maria do Rosário. Despite being a note of retraction, whose purpose was to make apologies for the insult, it has at least two effects of meaning in operation: an effect of meaning of softening or even of denial of what has already been said (the insult) and an effect of meaning of the insult as a defense or even retaliation against an attack previously made by Deputy Maria do Rosário.

Thus, by means of the expression “in the heat of the moment,” an effect of meaning of a softening/denial of the insult was produced, a slippage to a meaning of a routine and normalized excess in the “ideological clash between parliamentarians, specifically with regard to human rights policy,” engendered by the defense of divergent discursive positions on the part of the politicians in question in the Chamber of Deputies.

We can also observe, in this discursive position, and in the statement’s paraphrastic chain, that the President puts himself in the subjective position of victim, both of the attack by Deputy Maria do Rosário, who called him a “rapist,” and of the judicial system itself, which ordered him to repair a damage that did not exist, marked in the language by the adverb “unjustly.” The discursive formulations “after being unjustly offended by the congresswoman,” “was insulting me” and “replied,” thus present an effect of meaning of a softening of the episode through a cause and consequence relationship that was at the root of the insult, that is, the “alleged” insult would have happened only because of a previous attack against him. Therefore, despite claiming to be making apologies, the President repeats that the deputy insulted him (a statement that was precisely the basis for the criminal complaint filed by Maria do Rosário against Bolsonaro for the crime of insult), producing an effect of meaning of contesting the order to make a public retraction. In other words, there was no materialization of an apology: the public retraction slipped to the meaning of softening, justifying and defending said verbal aggression and even of its complete denial.

Finally, Deputy Maria do Rosário also made a statement commenting on the conviction of the former deputy. An equivalence relationship between the part and the whole was built in the association between public and private episodes of “violence and humiliation,” that is, between the violence she suffered as a parliamentarian in the

full exercise of her public activities and the violence (verbal, physical, psychological) experienced on a daily basis by many other women. In this sense, her victory is also a victory for all women. In her statement, the deputy also reinforced her social place as a politician that occupies the subject-position of human rights defender, manifested in a relationship of equivalence between the part and the whole, this time specifically with regard to “women’s rights, for the dignity of women”:

“I share my victory with all the women who suffer humiliation and violence, whom I will always defend. And that in politics, may they learn that there is no parliamentary immunity for acting against the law and disrespecting any person whatsoever,” Maria do Rosário told the reporter. In a video shared on her social networks, the parliamentarian announced that she will **donate the money to “entities and people working in the area of women’s rights, for the dignity of women.”** (<https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/juiza-manda-bolsonaro-pagar-r-10-mil-a-maria-do-rosario-por-ofensas/>. Emphasis added.)

4 Conclusion

Our aim in this article is to analyze the effects of meaning produced in a case of verbal violence occurred in the Brazilian National Congress in 2014, which were much reverberated in Brazilian media and generated a legal and political confrontation.

Based on the theoretical-methodological framework of Discourse Analysis, we selected news articles covering these events until their outcome in order to identify the effects of meaning produced in the relationship between political and legal discourses in a case of verbal violence in the public sphere, according to the social places that deputies Jair Bolsonaro and Maria do Rosário occupied and the subject-positions in which the parliamentarians put themselves into and/or were called upon to occupy. We made a brief survey of the studies on insult and on the relationship between language and verbal violence, and outlined some considerations on the legal implications in the analysis of the selected corpus.

Our results indicate that, at the intersection of political and legal discourse in the case of verbal aggression discussed here, a tension and a contradiction occurred between different discursive formations generating different meanings and subject-positions. First, we identified

the effects produced by the different subject-positions sustained in the social place of politicians, where the contradiction made itself visible in the effects of meaning disputed and restructured in terms of Human Rights, analyzed in particular in two moments: one referring to the discussions on the lowering of the age of criminal responsibility, in 2003, and the other to the delivery of the final report of the National Truth Commission, in 2014. These divergent discursive positions, which we call left wing and far right, produced effects of meaning of verbal aggression and of a routine political confrontation, respectively. In a second step, we identified and analyzed the legal effects of meaning of the complaints about incitement to crime, moral damage and insult, both in the civil and criminal spheres, and the legal effects of meaning that were established in this not-logically-stabilized space, where the dispute called forth memories and generated legal knowledge that traversed the political dimension, producing, in the process and in the ruling on the cases, effects of meaning of damage that were also reframed in the far-right discursive positions as injustice and in the left-wing discursive positions as victory, not just for a woman, but for all women who suffer any kind of violence.

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discursive approach to attacks on the honor of/against political players in Brazilian electronic media,” carried out at the Research Laboratory for Discourse Analysis (LAPADis), with the Discourse Analysis Research Group (GPADis), of the State University of Southwest Bahia. The analysis of the corpus, the discussion of the results, the conclusion and the references were elaborated jointly by the authors. The review of the final version, carried out after acceptance of publication of the article, was also made by both authors.

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